

HUMANITIES

Summer 1988
Volume 10/Number 3

NETWORK

CCH Honors Maxine Hong Kingston as 7th Annual Humanities Lecturer

On Friday evening, May 13, the California Council for the Humanities honored Maxine Hong Kingston as its 7th annual humanities lecturer. CCH chair, Mort Rothstein, introduced Kingston to an enthusiastic Fresno audience and lauded her contributions to the humanities "as an interpreter of the Chinese-American experience in California and of the human spirit everywhere."

Kingston then described her novel in progress, *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book*, and read an excerpt from it. Portions of that excerpt together with some of the audience questions are included here.



Maxine Hong Kingston describes her current work in progress to the audience at the Fresno Hilton

Maxine Hong Kingston: This book is the longest thing I have ever written. I started it seven years ago. The title is *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book*. I am still working on it in that I am going through an editing phase. Let me explain about the title and I think it will tell you quite a lot about the book. In the sixties a "tripmaster" was someone who led mental, spiritual, and geographical journeys. "Monkey" is a mythical Chinese character who is the spirit of this novel. Monkey tales are a mythology about a journey to the West. A long time ago there was a monk, a monkey, a pig, and a sandman, and they journey to the West to find something. It was a quest. What they found were Buddhist scriptures which they brought back to China from India.

My idea in this book is to say that the Monkey keeps traveling West and arrives in America and becomes an American Monkey. The book is set in the sixties and there was a sort of monkeyish spirit in America at that time and is still here. A "fake book" is the name that

jazz musicians give to the book that has the basic melody of a song. They use the "fake book" to improvise from. I mean to write a "fake book" not in musical notes but in novel form. My idea is that I will suggest many stories and many trips and the reader will be able to read the book and to continue the stories on his own. My stories will suggest further stories.

The selection I will read is from the middle of the book. The main character's name is Wittman Ah Sing and he has just gotten married in a Universal Life church ceremony. In the sixties one way to avoid the draft was to get married before a certain date. Those people were called "Kennedy husbands." So Wittman Ah Sing has gotten married, he is a "Kennedy husband", but he is not sure if he is committed romantically to this girl. He does, however, decide to drive her home to meet his mother. She is a beautiful California blonde, and when he arrives at his house, his mother is having a mah jong party.

Through the screen door—the crack clack crash of mah jong. The son of the house would have turned about but for the girl he was with. Always do the harder thing. He opened the door, went ahead, held it for Tana.

Ruby screamed. "Eeek!" Stood up and screamed again, pointing. And Auntie Sadie screamed, and Auntie Marlesse ran to him. His mother eeked him again. Eeek. What's wrong? The white girl? A hobo followed them inside? "What have you done to yourself?!" She put her hands to her cheeks.

"You used to be such a beautiful boy!" shouted Auntie Marlesse, looking up at him.

"Too much hair," said Auntie Sadie. "Much too hairy."

"You go shave," said Mother. "Shave it off! Shave it off! Oh, hawk geen nay say!" That is, "Scares you to death!" "Gik say nay!" That is, "Irrks you to death!" "Galls you to death!" Clack! Clack!

"No act, Ma," he said.

"Don't say hello to your mother," she said.

"Sticks and stones, honey boy. Never you mind," said Auntie Bessie. "Have a heart, Ruby."

A dog jumped on him. "Down, Queenie. Behave," said Auntie Jadine, its owner. "Where you manners, Queenie?" Those who usually spoke Chinese talked to the yapperdog in English. "Down, Queenie. Come heah." They spoke English to him and to the dog. American animals.

"GOOD dog," said Wittman.

"Wit Man come to see his momma," explained the aunties, one to another. "Good boy. Big boy now." Clack clack clack. A racket of clack clack clack. "All grow up. College grad, Wit Man?" Nobody asked if he were



Mort Rothstein, CCH Chair, welcomes Maxine Hong Kingston as the 1988 Public Humanities Lecturer

a doctor or an engineer. How tactful. Not asking about work at all. "Sit. Sit. Sit." Tana got a side chair at one of the dining tables. "Oh, I be so sorry. I didn't recognize you, Wit Man," said Aunt Sadie. "You so changed."

"That's o.k., Auntie Sadie."

"Come talk to your Aunt Lilah."

"Hello, Aunt Lilah." "Hello, Auntie Dolly," said Wittman. "hello, Aunt Peggy." He went to each auntie, shaking hands with some, kneeling beside this one and that one for her to take a better look at him.

"He was a cute beebee." "Why you not visit Auntie more often?" "Me too, honey boy. Visit you Aunt Sondra too."

The ladies at his mother's table were comforting her. "Hairy face, fashion on a plate," said Auntie Sophie. "You the one sent him to college, Ruby." Clack clack.

"Where I go wrong, I ask you," said Wittman's mother. "He was clean cut. He used to be soo mun. (That is, he used to be soigne.) Where I go wrong. Kay ho soo kay ge ba, neh. Gum soo. Soo doc jai." That is, "He takes a lot after his father. So like. Too alike." "Moong cha cha. Both of them, father and son, moong cha cha."

"In Hong Kong now, they say m.c.c.," said Auntie Peggy, who was up on the latest.

"M.c.c." "M.c.c." The aunties tried the new Hong Kong slang. "Moong cha cha" means "spacy," spaced out and having to grope like a blindman.

"The goal was to write a Chinese-American song of the self and have it very much part of American literature, with an American voice."

Meanwhile, at Tana's table, Auntie Dolly, who was sophisticated, was saying, "What's your name, honey? Tan-ah. What a pretty name. Russian? Do you play, Tàh-ah? I'll show you how to play. This is a very famous Chinese game. Mah jong. Can you say mah jong?" Auntie Dolly had been a show girl in New York, and knew how to endear herself to foreigners. She did introductions. Good. Wittman did not want to announce Tana to the room, and he was not about to tablehop with her like a wedding couple. "That's Madame S.Y. Chin. This is Madame Gordon Fong." Etcetera. "Hello," said Tana. Well, you can't expect her to say, "How do you do, Madame." And if she said, "How do you do, Mrs." there's been a demotion. Madame. Madame Chiang Kai Shek. Madame Sun Yat Sen. Madame Charles Jones Soong. Madame Nhu. All the cookbook ladies are madames too. And all the restaurant guys are generals.

Generalissimo. "Let me show you how to play, honey." Don't trust anybody who calls you honey, Tana. It's a verbal tic.

"My name is Maydene Lam," said Auntie Maydene. Call me Maydene, dear."

"How do you do, Maydene?"

"I've always liked your name," said Auntie Lily Rose. "Such a pretty stage name, Maydene Lam."

"Isn't it delicious? There are four little girls named after me in the Valley." Clickety clackety.

"What beautiful hair you have, Tan-ah. She's gorgeous, Wit Man. You are so fair, Tan-ah. Isn't she fair?"

"Thank you," said Tana, who should learn to return compliments. Every auntie had jet black dyed hair. Why do women as they get older have to have fixed hair? Because of beauty fixed at 1945. These were the glamor girls of World War II. Taking after the Soong sisters and Anna Chennault, who married guys in uniform. Whenever the aunties' pictures appeared in the papers—Chinese or English—they were identified as "the lovely Madame Houston W. P. Fong," "the beauteous Madame Johnny Tom." They were professional beauties. Quite a few of them had been Wongettes. "Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Eddie Pond proudly welcomes to the Kubla Khan the beautiful Wongettes, Chinese blonds in a blue mood."

"Ciao!" "Poong!" "Kong!" Action. "Eight ten thousands!" Mah jong! Clack! Crash! Mah jong! He stood behind his mother to look at her winning hand.

"Talk to See Nigh here," said his mother.

"You enjoying the game, See Nigh?" he said to the lady whom he had never met before.

"Oh, how well-behaved," said the See Nigh, the Lady. "And such good manners. Most boys with beards are bum-how. He doesn't have to call me See Nigh. You call me Auntie, Wit Man."

"One of the things I enjoyed in writing this book was using a variety of sounds, and I hope that comes across."

His mother spoke sotto voce, in Chinese, "Who's the girl?"

"My friend. A good friend," he said in English. One shouldn't speak a foreign language in front of people who do not understand it, especially when talking about them. Don't add to the paranoia level of the universe.

"Serious?" asked his mother.

"Sure."

"How serious?"

"Serious, o.k.?"

Gary Snyder had gone to Japan to meditate for years, and could now spend five minutes in the same room with his mother. Beat his record. "So you walk with her," said Auntie Sophie. She was translating "go with." She meant, "So you go with her."

"Mixing with girls," teased Auntie Marlese. "Old enough to mix with girls."

"She's so rude. She's not talking to me," said Mom. "She's hurting my feelings, Wittman."

"Introduce you gal to you mama, young man," said Auntie Sophie. Clack!

"Hey, Tana," he called over to her table. "Meet my mother, Ruby Ah Sing. Mom, meet my pahng yow, Tana." "Pahng yow" means "friend"; maybe Tana would think it meant "wife."

"Hi," Tana waved.



Vimala Nowlis of California Tomorrow speaks with Maxine Hong Kingston at the public reception following the lecture

"You aren't growing up to be a heartbreaking man, are you, honey boy?" said Aunt Lilah. "Speak for your own self," said backtalking Wittman. Clack Clack! She was a seventy-year-old glamour girl, who was having a romance with a fifty-five-year-old married lover. They saw each other Monday, Wednesday, and Friday nights. Whenever you are tete-a-tete with her, she reveals, "My beloved is a sai-yun, a western man." (which isn't correct; we're westerners too.) "He is offering to divorce his wife for me. But I don't want to be married. Three times a week is quite enough."

"U.C., state-run, public school, don't teach them to present themselves socially," explained Auntie Jean, an authority on higher education, a son at Harvard, a daughter at Wellesley, where the Soong sister who married Sun Yat Sen went, another son at Princeton, the baby daughter at Sarah Lawrence. "As I said to May Ling Soong," she said, "I-vee Leak—the A #1 all-around. They learn how to make money and they learn to go around in society." The cruel thing to say back to her is: "What eating club does Ranceford belong to?" But you don't want to be mean to her. They will graduate and never come back.

"At UC this one learned grow long hair," Mom agreed. "And go out with bok gwai noi." As if dating las gringas wasn't his idea, he'd had to be taught. "You ought to see them there in Berkeley. Doi doi jek. Yut doi, yow yut doi." Pair after pair (of mixed couples). "Jek," an article used with livestock. "Doi," an article used with poultry.

"You meet my Wittman too late, See Nigh. You missed out on one good looking boy."

"You still got one matinee idol under the hair, Ruby," said Aunt Marlese. "Cut it for your poor mother, Wit Man. I remember when you were yay high. I used to change his diapers. You were deh, Wit Man. He was so deh." Click click. She gave them an example of deh, her head to one side, a finger to her dimple, coy lady pose. The aunties smiled at him like he was going to act deh any moment, for his mother at least. To act deh means you do baby talk, act babyish and bring out motherly love.

"Cut it off, Wittman," said his mother. "Cut it off."

"Give me some slack."

"I have traveled many places all over the world, and I don't know if it is because I was born in the Valley, but I always find this place real, and I always come back to it."

MHK: One of the things I enjoyed in writing this book was using a variety of sounds, and I hope that comes across. I picked the sixties to write about because it would give me an opportunity to use a modern slangy language, a loose kind of language that was different from the way I wrote before. What surprised me is that it seems to leave a lot of room for me to put other languages in, such as whole phrases of untranslated Chinese or Spanish or French. It is amazing to me that the more American I make the book, the more it allows room for other languages.

Q: What is the significance of the character's name, Wittman Ah Sing?

MHK: I was thinking of Walt Whitman, and especially of the "Song of Myself." "Sing" as in singing, "Ah" as in "I". I sing a song of myself. The goal was to write a Chinese-American song of the self and have it very much part of American literature, with an American voice. That's why I named him Wittman, although his name is spelled W-i-t-m-a-n. I find that that name is very typical of a Chinese way of naming children—Stanford, Wadsworth, and so on. The parents of Wittman named him after the poet—although they spelled it wrong. Also "sing" means star, and this book is about the Chinese-American theater.

Q: Why did you choose to use a male protagonist, a male point of view?

MHK: One reason that I chose a male protagonist is that—I lived through the sixties and I'm the same age as Wittman, but when I think back on being twenty-three years old it seems like it was the young men who had all the interesting adventures. They were the ones who used the wonderful new language. It seemed to me if I wrote from a woman's viewpoint it would be a different kind of story, and I wanted the opportunity to write that kind of masculine slang voice.

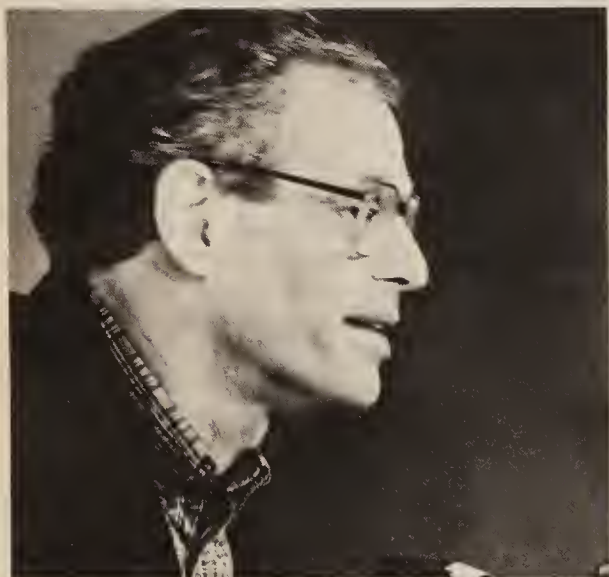
"I think that there are many, many stories here, but you have to have the eyes to see the secrets of the Valley."

Q: You were born in Stockton. What influence did your life in the Valley have on your work?

MHK: I have traveled many places all over the world, and I don't know if it is because I was born in the Valley, but I always find this place real, and I always come back to it. Even though I have lived in Hawaii for 17 years, that place seems like a fantasy, like a long vacation. In the Valley it seems like real life, real work. I understand what is going on here. I also think it is a secret how wonderful the stories are, how rich the Valley is with mythology, with images, with towns that have history and tradition. It's a secret because I feel I am one of the few people to see this. I think that there are many, many stories here, but you have to have the eyes to see the secrets of the Valley.

Cultures in Transition: Immigration in the Central Valley

Charles Wollenberg
Instructor of History
Vista College



Charles Wollenberg opens the panel discussion on immigration in the Central Valley

We are in the process here in California of creating one of the most diverse societies the world has ever seen. If the United States is a multi-ethnic, multi-national, multi-cultural nation, California is also that—only very much more so. We are a kind of exaggerated version of the national experience. Whereas about 20% of the American population is made up of ethnic or third-world minorities, more than a third of California's population fits into that category. That includes about six million people of Latin American descent, about two million blacks, about two million Asians and Pacific Islanders, and about a quarter of a million Native Americans. That adds up to more than ten million of California's twenty-seven million people as members of ethnic or third-world minorities. Moreover, that segment of the population is growing much more rapidly than the total population.

Since 1940 California's total population has quadrupled. That is an extraordinary rate of growth. But the populations of the two largest ethnic minorities, Latinos and blacks, have grown more than ten times during that same period. Since the immigration law reforms of the 1960s and the Indochinese refugee provisions of the 1970s, the Asian and Pacific Islander group is now the fastest growing segment of California's population. If these demographic trends continue, and there is no reason to assume that they won't, by the early 21st century, California will become the first mainland state with a third world majority. Or a more accurate way of saying it is that by the year 2010 or even earlier, everyone in California will be members of one or another minority.

The change that this represents in California history is not a change in kind but a change in degree. California's history for the past two hundred twenty years or more has been a history of multi-ethnic and multi-national migration. The original Spanish-speaking settlers of California were of mixed ethnic background. Almost none of them were natives of Spain. Virtually all of them came from northwestern Mexico. They were young men coming to California to gain social and economic mobility, and in that sense were very similar

to the kind of people who have continued across the border from Mexico right up to the present day.

The first massive multi-ethnic migration in California history is, of course, the California Gold Rush. We tend to think of the stereotype of someone who came here during the Gold Rush as a young English-speaking Anglo with a plaid shirt and a pair of Levi's. There is some truth to that. The majority of people who came were young English-speaking people from the Midwest and the East. But a very large and significant minority of the people who came were members of ethnic minorities. There was a small but very important black migration to California during those years. There was a new and very impressive immigration from Latin America, not only from Mexico but also from Peru, Chile and Central America. People came from Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii. The Gold Rush began a very important tradition in California history of indirect European immigration. By indirect I mean people who arrived here via the East Coast and then came across the continent to California.

In 1860 the American city which had the highest percentage of foreign born residents was San Francisco. Sixty percent of San Francisco's population in 1880 were either foreign born immigrants or their children. That was the highest percentage of any city in the United States. Most of those people were of European background. You cannot talk about the history of Fresno or the development of agriculture in the Valley without talking about the tremendous role that various waves of European immigrants played in that development.

The Gold Rush also established the tradition of large scale Asian immigration to the United States. The pioneer Asian immigrants to the United States came to California from China as early as 1851 or 1852. Like everyone else they came to get rich quick. The Chinese were by far the largest ethnic minority in the mining economy by the middle 1850s, and they quickly became the target for discrimination and racism. They were forced to assume economic roles that tended to serve the white majority of miners rather than to compete

"By the year 2010 or even earlier, everyone in California will be members of one or another minority."

against them. There were ten men for every woman so there were occupations that were considered to be "woman's work", such as laundry, cooking, or domestic service, that were available for these Chinese men.

The Chinese also worked in the construction of the railroads. Chinese workers not only laid the track of the transcontinental across the Sierra Nevada but also laid the track of the Southern Pacific line that came down the San Joaquin Valley. By 1874 when the county seat was moved to Fresno, more than a third of Fresno's population were Chinese, and already a Chinatown had been established.

The Chinese were also important in the development of agriculture in the Valley; some Chinese growers actually pioneered some of the crops still grown in the Valley. The period of the most intensive Chinese immigration to California in the 19th century was in the 1870s. Unfortunately that coincided with a period of economic depression which created a lot of unemployment. So at that time the already existing anti-Chinese movement took on a new vehemence and eventually it extended to Washington, D.C. In 1882—to a large degree as a result of pressure from California—the U.S. Congress established the Chinese Exclusion Act which restricted further immigration of significant numbers of Chinese to the United States. This is a very important event in American history because it is the first time that the United States had any serious restriction on immigration of any kind. It begins a forty-year process of greater and greater immigration restriction culminating in the laws of the 1920s.

Here in the Valley the employers who came to depend on Chinese labor looked to Japan as an alternative source of Asian labor. By the early 20th century the number of Japanese coming in began to match the number of Chinese that had been coming in the early 1880s. And the Japanese became the new target of anti-Asian discrimination. As Japanese farm laborers became farm operators, the employers who had welcomed the Japanese as a source of cheap labor now saw them as a source of economic competition. In the early 20th century, California passed what was called

continued on page 8



Moderator Vimala Nowlis of California Tomorrow introduces one of the roundtable participants

Immigrant Students in California Schools

Marcia T. Chen
California Tomorrow Fellow

Editor's Note: In 1986, California Tomorrow launched the "Immigrant Students and the Schools" project to study the social and educational experiences of immigrant children, as well as how the schools are meeting the challenges these children bring to them. Project staff conducted 360 structured in-depth interviews with immigrant students in 33 communities throughout California. The report of that study, Crossing the Schoolhouse Border: Immigrant Students and the California Public Schools, was released early this year and is available for \$6 from California Tomorrow, Ft. Mason Center, Bldg B, San Francisco, CA 94123.



Marcia Chen describes the difficulties faced by immigrant students in the California schools

Growing up in the United States, I never felt being an immigrant was a plus. I tried to forget that I was an immigrant. But today, after two years of working in the "Immigrant Students" project, I must say that this issue has become part of me. So much so that I began to understand better my own acculturation process. At the same time, I began to listen to hundreds of immigrant students across the state about their experiences. California Tomorrow set out to find out who the immigrant children are in the public schools, what kind of life experience they have had, and what do they think about their schools. We also looked into how the California schools and its educators were meeting this new challenge.

So what did we find? We found that the California schools are going through some dramatic changes in the student population. Schools are finding that the old teaching approaches are ineffective. In general, immigrant students enter our educational system very eager to learn but often the schools are unable to meet their needs.

I decided to bring a small glimpse of the immigrant student to you today hoping to break some stereotypes you might have about kids in the California public schools. I would like to describe four different immigration journeys from four different children we interviewed during the course of our research.

Maria was born in a town of about 1,000 people in Mexico. When Maria was eight her parents decided to come to California to find some work because they heard from a relative that there were jobs in Los Angeles. Maria's older brother and father came up north first to set up a family base. Maria and her mother followed two months later. Maria recalls taking a bus for several hours in the hot dry weather, and these were her thoughts: "I was excited. I was dancing. We were going to the United States, a big beautiful modern country with houses and lawns. My father could work there and we would have food and clothes and my mother wouldn't cry at night. This is what I thought then. No more poverty."

When they neared the border, Maria and her mother went across separately. "I was caught the first time and sent back to my aunt's house. She gave a lot of money to a man who put me in a sack in the back of his truck with potatoes and told me to be totally quiet until he came to get me. I was hot and couldn't breathe and so scared. I cried with no sound. After hours he came to get me. I had gotten across, but where was my mother?" Eventually Maria was reunited with her family in Los Angeles where she lives and attends school, which is by the way four times bigger in population size than her native home town. Since her arrival five years ago, Maria has returned to her hometown in Mexico several times. As many Mexican immigrants do, she shuttles back and forth, often missing weeks of school at a time.

My second student is Len, a Cambodian boy. Len was born in the highlands of Cambodia. He can barely

remember anything about his native hometown. In 1980, when Len was five years old, his family tried to escape from Cambodia. Their journey took them over mountains, through jungles, and lasted about nine days. Along the way, his father, brother, and sister were killed. He and his mother and a cousin managed to escape to the Thai border and were accepted into the refugee camps. When I asked him what he remembers about his life before immigrating to the United States, this is what he said: "The first camp was terrible. Soldiers were mean and would push us down. There was little food and water and the children cried all the time. I was very sick, but I had to go and stand a long time in line and get some water. I was there for four months. Then I was sent to another camp, not in the mountains, and it was nicer. It was clean and there was some food. I was there a year. The best camp was the last one because it was big and there was a teacher who was nice to us. When I heard that we were coming to the United States, I was so happy. I thought now I can have a home again."

When Len first arrived in the U.S. his family was settled in Ohio. Two years later they migrated to California to join a distant relative in Los Angeles. Len is now in junior high, and this is what he said when I asked him about the war. "The tragedy during the war hurts inside when I remember what happened in the past. I try not to think about it, but at night I dream and see my brother who they killed. I dream about him trying to find us. I dream that they keep shooting him and shooting him until I wake up."

My third student, May, immigrated from Taiwan three years ago with her younger brother and her parents. She had just finished middle school, which she attended six days a week plus tutoring every day after school plus piano lessons once a week. Her parents, both educators in Taiwan, had applied for immigration visas years before so that when their children were in their teens, they would be able to immigrate. Their hope is to give May and her brother better educational and career opportunities. May felt sad to leave her schoolmates and extended family behind, but she also felt excited to see America. "Before I came to America, I had beautiful dreams about this country. At that time I didn't know that the first word I would learn in this country would be a dirty word. American students always picked on us, frightened us, made fun of us and laughed at our English. They broke our lockers, threw food on us in the cafeteria, said dirty words to us. Many times they shouted at me, 'Get out of here, you Chink. Go back to your country.'" When May was asked about the educational difference in the U.S. and her country, she said, "The greatest difference is the attitudes of the students and how the students treat other students. In

Taiwan everyone knows you must study hard. It is very competitive and the teachers want you to pass the examination. Here there is no pressure. If you don't study, it is o.k. In Taiwan they force us to study for our own good. The goal is to get into college. Here only the parents care if you go to college. The school doesn't really care about us." Today May is a senior at a suburban high school. Her parents want her to attend UCLA or Stanford. She is very worried that she won't get in.

My last student is from El Salvador. Carlos is his name. He immigrated to the U.S. five years ago. Unlike the other immigrant students I described to you, Carlos made this long trip to America by himself. His parents did not want to see him end up in combat; he made the journey north to flee the recent civil war and violence. As many Central American refugees will tell you, the journey through Mexico to get to California includes bandits, prisons, and extortion. For most of Carlos' childhood, guns, soldiers, and bombs are his memory. He is fifteen years old today and has had about three full years of education.

When we asked him questions about his personal problems, he said, "I used to worry a lot about my Dad, that I would never see him again because he was left behind in El Salvador." Today Carlos lives with his older brother and several other Central Americans in Los Angeles. "Once I was here the hardest problem was financial instability. After my mother went back to El Salvador, we couldn't support ourselves. My brother left school and went to work, but his salary is not enough for both of us. It makes me think about dropping out of school too, but if I don't have an education, it will always be hard here. I worry so much about money that I think I will have to leave school."

So you can see that immigrant children have come to our schools with very different life experiences. I described four. There are hundreds of others that we heard and thousands of others unheard. I hope the stories of these immigrant journeys will help the general population understand some of the large leaps of adjustment that immigrant children must make in order to survive and succeed in this country.

Conference continued

One needs, that is to say, to have two dramatic narratives from which one can draw in entering upon the present. And this means that one cannot be an American without a certain tension within oneself, even conflict as to which stories are one's own stories."

We saw from the testimony at the conference that this is an ongoing question that lasts for generations. On one side we need to remember or re-discover the stories identified with the particularities of our own community, from our own ethnic heritage, or "we will lose what it is that we have to contribute to the common culture. We shall have nothing to bring, nothing to give." But, as MacIntyre points out, this ethnic story needs to be balanced with the need for a common story: "We need to share in a common conversation and to understand each other as participating in a common enterprise whose one story is the story of us all." Therefore if "each of us dwells too much, or even exclusively, upon his or her own ethnic particularity, then we are in danger of fragmenting and even destroying the common life."

The Public Humanities Conference was an opportunity for many different voices to be heard: recent immigrants, young school children, and elderly Armenian survivors, as well as the voice of *Tripmaster Monkey* and the Mexican-American *corridos*. According to MacIntyre, "both the telling of stories and the telling of stories about the telling of stories is central to the enterprise of the humanities." The Public Humanities Conference in Fresno made a contribution to this aim of "finding our story" both as individuals and as part of a common conversation.

Songs and Lore of the Mexican Immigrant Experience

Jesús Luna
Professor of History
CSU, Fresno

In his book *North from Mexico: The Spanish-speaking People of the United States*, written forty years ago, Carey McWilliams described a continuing odyssey that dates back five centuries: people of Spanish-Mexican descent making the arduous trek north from Mexico. Explorers and pioneers at first, workers in search of jobs scores of years later, the Spanish-Mexican migration has been always prompted by the search for fortune.

The migration of Mexican workers since the turn of the century has at times reached near-epic proportions, with hundreds of thousands of individuals streaming across the border daily. A population movement of such magnitude does not take place without an enormous amount of social and cultural upheaval both for the immigrants themselves and for the host society.

For the Mexican immigrants the northward odyssey has engendered many feelings—hope and frustration, a sense of adventure, homesickness, fear and resignation. But whatever the experiences encountered, the Mexicans have faithfully recorded their collective feelings in the songs and lore they created and continue to create. The songs express the deepest sentiments of the Mexican—sometimes comically, sometimes tragically, but always, *del mero corazon* (straight from the heart).

The turn of the century immigrants who came to this country were influenced by several factors: one of course was the “push” factor; another was what attracted them here or the “pull” factor. Mexico’s chronic instability caused by the revolution from 1910-1917 was one of the aspects of the “push” factor. Their own country was torn apart; people needed bread; people needed to survive. And they came northward. On the “pull” side the basic factor is the expanding southwest economy. Mexican labor was needed to do the jobs that many would not do for the cheap wages.

The two thousand mile border between Mexico and the United States has always been a very permeable border. By the 1920s there were at least a half a million people who paid a nickel or a quarter at the border to come across. The newcomers were subject to exploitation by their employers and to the prejudices of residents. And, as one immigrant put it, “I have left the best years of my life and my strength here in this country. I have sprinkled with the sweat of my brow the fields and the factories of these gringos who only know how to make one sweat and then they deport you when they don’t need you anymore.”

This song, *El Deportado*, was probably written in the 1930s, a period when because of the Depression Mexicans were rounded up and deported, left voluntarily, or were persuaded to leave.

El Deportado (The Deportee)

Voy a cantarles señores
Voy a cantarles señores
todo lo que yo sufrí,
desde que dejé mi patria,
desde que dejé mi patria
por venir a este país.

Serían las diez de la noche,
serían las diez de la noche,
comenzó un tren a silbar.
Oí que dijo mi madre,
“Ahí viene ese tren ingrato
que a mi hijo se va a llevar.”

I’m going to sing to you, gentlemen,
I’m going to sing to you, gentlemen
all about my sufferings,
since I left my country
since I left my country
to come to this nation.

It must have been about ten at night
it must have been about ten at night
a train began to whistle.
I heard my mother say,
“Here comes that cruel train
that is going to take my son.”

“Adiós mi madre querida,
adiós mi madre querida,
écheme su bendición.
Yo me voy al extranjero,
yo me voy al extranjero
donde no hay revolución.

Corre, corre maquinita,
corre, corre maquinita,
vámonos de la estación.
No quiero ver a mi madre
llorar por su hijo querido,
por su hijo del corazón.

Al fin sólo la campana,
al fin sólo la campana,
dos silbidos pegó el tren.
“No lloren mis compañeros,
no lloren mis compañeros
que me hacen llorar también.”

Pasamos pronto Jalisco,
pasamos pronto Jalisco,
ay, que fuerte corría el tren
La Piedad, luego Irapuato
Silago luego la Chona,
y Aguas Calientes también.

Al recordar esas horas,
al recordar esas horas,
me palpita el corazón.
Cuando divisé a lo lejos,
cuando divisé a lo lejos
ese mentado Torreón.

Cuando Chihuahua pasamos,
cuando Chihuahua pasamos,
se notó gran confusión;
los empleados de la aduana,
los empleados de la aduana,
que pasan revisión.

Llegamos por fin a Juárez,
llegamos por fin a Juárez,
y allí fue mi apuración.
“¿Qué dónde vas que
de ‘ónde vienes?”
“¿Qué cuánto dinero tienes
para entrar a esta nación?”

“Señores traigo dinero,
señores traigo dinero
para poder inmigrar.”
“Tu dinero nada vale
tu dinero nada vale.
Te tenemos que bañar.”

Ay, mis paisanos queridos,
ay, mis paisanos queridos,
yo les platíco nomás
que me estaban dando ganas,
que me estaban dando ganas,
de volverme para atrás.

Crucé por fin la frontera,
crucé por fin la frontera,
y en un renganche salí.
Ay, mis queridos paisanos,
ay, mis queridos paisanos,
fue mucho lo que sufrí.

Los güeros son muy malhoras,
los güeros son muy malhoras
se valen de la ocasión;
y a todos los mejicanos,
y a todos los mejicanos
los tratan sin compasión.

Ahí traen la gran polvadera,
ahí traen la gran polvadera
y sin consideración,
mujeres, niños y ancianos
los llevan a la frontera.
Nos echan de esta nación.

Adiós paisanos queridos,
adiós paisanos queridos,
ya nos van a deportar.
Pero no somos bandidos,
pero no somos bandidos,
venimos a camellar.

Los espero allá en mi tierra,
los espero allá en mi tierra,
ya no hay más revolución.
Vámonos cuates queridos,
seremos bien recibidos
en nuestra bella nación.

Goodby my beloved mother,
goodby my beloved mother,
give me your blessing.
I am going abroad,
I am going abroad
where there is no revolution.

Run, run, little engine
run, run, little engine
Let’s leave the station.
I don’t want to see my mother
cry for her beloved son,
for the son of her heart.

At last the bell rang
at last the bell rang,
the train whistled twice.
“Don’t cry my buddies,
don’t cry my buddies,
for you’ll make me cry as well.”

We quickly passed Jalisco,
we quickly passed Jalisco,
oh, how fast the train ran,
La Piedad, then Irapuato
Silago then La Chona,
and Aguas Calientes as well.

When I remember those hours,
when I remember those hours,
my heart palpitates.
When I saw from afar,
when I saw from afar,
that famous city of Torreón.

When we passed through Chihuahua,
when we passed through Chihuahua,
we noticed a great confusion;
the officials from the customhouse
the officials from the customhouse
who inspected everything.

We arrived at Juarez at last,
we arrived at Juarez at last,
and there I had an anxious moment.
“Where are you going, where
you come from?”
“How much money do you have
to enter this country?”

“Gentlemen, I have money,
gentlemen, I have money
so that I can immigrate.”
“Your money isn’t worth anything,
your money isn’t worth anything.
We have to bathe you.”

Oh, my dear countrymen,
oh, my dear countrymen,
I’m just letting you know
that I was beginning to feel
that I was beginning to feel
like going right back.

At last I crossed the border,
at last I crossed the border,
and with a contracted crew I left.
Oh, my dear countrymen,
oh, my dear countrymen,
what I suffered was too much.

The white men are very wicked
the white men are very wicked,
they take unfair advantage;
and all the Mexicans,
and all the Mexicans
they treat without compassion.

They kick up a great commotion,
they kick up a great commotion,
and without considering our rights,
women, children and old ones
are taken to the border.
They kick us out of this country.

Goodby, dear countrymen,
goodby, dear countrymen,
they are going to deport us.
But we are not bandits,
but we are not bandits,
we came to work.

I’ll wait for you in my homeland,
I’ll wait for you in my homeland,
there is no more revolution.
Let’s leave, dear friends,
we will be welcomed
in our beautiful country.



Susan Gordon, CCH Program Officer, introduces the new *Film & Speakers Directory* at the Public Humanities Conference

CCH Introduces New Film & Speakers Program in Fresno

One of the highlights of the Fresno Public Humanities Conference was the introduction of a new CCH minigrant opportunity, the Film & Speakers Program. CCH Program Officer, Dr. Susan Gordon, described the program to the Fresno audience and introduced several of the speakers participating in the program. One of the films offered in the new Directory, “American Chinatown,” was screened and a follow-up discussion of the film was led by Dr. Peter Leung, Asian American Studies Department, UC Davis.

The Film & Speakers Directory lists 18 films, produced in part with CCH funds, which are offered to organizations interested in sponsoring film/discussion programs for local adult audiences. A list of speakers for each film is also included. Special minigrant awards of \$500 to help defray the costs of presenting the program are available to organizations in the Central Valley. This incentive is part of the Council’s outreach effort to reach the underserved populations of the San Joaquin Valley. However, any organization is invited to request the directory and to use the films and speakers listed in it for their own programming needs.

To receive a free copy of the Film & Speakers Directory complete the attached request form and send it to: CCH, 315 W. Ninth St., Suite 1103, Los Angeles, 900015.

Name of non-profit organization that would sponsor a film/discussion program _____

Your name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip code _____

Phone () _____

Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley

"Image and Memory: Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley," a panel discussion sponsored by the Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation, Inc. was presented at the Holiday Inn in Fresno on May 15 as part of the Public Humanities Conference. Excerpts from the presentations of the three panel members are presented here. The moderator, Barlow Der Mugrdichian, Instructor in Armenian Studies, CSU Fresno, opened the discussion with the following remarks.

Immigration of Armenians to the Central Valley began in 1881 when the first permanent settlers arrived in Fresno. They so liked the weather and the environment that they persuaded many of their friends and relatives to come two years later. These early immigrants made their living by peddling fruit, working in the fields, and selling candy and tobacco and groceries. A much larger group of immigrants came after the 1894-96 massacres in Ottoman Turkey. They came for a different reason, that is, they were forced out of their historic homeland.

The first thing they wanted to do when they came to California was to re-establish life as they had known it in the old country, and the way to do that was to re-create familiar institutions. So we have the beginning of the first churches, the first compatriotic unions, and the beginning of an Armenian press. From the period of 1896 to 1915 the number of Armenians who came to California grew as the oppression in the Ottoman empire increased.

By 1920 large numbers of Armenian immigrants had come both to this Valley and to other parts of the country. The entire population of Fresno County was 45,000 people. Of this number, 10,000 were Armenians. Leaving a homeland, leaving a village was less easy in those times when people did not move around as much as we do today. People were forced to abandon their homes and family members with no hope of ever seeing them again. The memories of this first generation of immigrants are very traumatic. The second and third generation have different memories: they grew up in America and easily integrated into American life. Their first language was often English and their picture of the genocide has been filtered through the generations.

Members of the panel will explore the issues associated with memories of the genocide for several generations of Armenians—both the survivors and the children and grandchildren of the survivors.

THE BURDEN OF MEMORY First Generation: Patterns of Remembering

Dr. Donald Miller, Director of the School of Religion, USC

Ed note: Dr. Miller has conducted 100 interviews with Armenian survivors and describes here the pattern that emerges as survivors remembered their past.

The pattern of remembering among the survivors of the 1915 genocide includes five distinctly different types of reflection.

First, survivors remember in a highly idealized manner their life before the deportation from their towns and villages. They remember that their family life was stable; they recount with fondness the everyday activities associated with going to church or school or participating in festive occasions such as weddings. Life is remembered in that pre-deportation stage as pleasant and good. Many speak of the prosperity of the Armenians; family relations were extremely tight knit. Compared to the devastation that followed, this was an idyllic period, perhaps idealized in the memories of survivors in ways that exceeded the actual reality. Nevertheless, this pre-deportation period is a benchmark against which they compared much of the rest of their lives.

The second type of survivor memory revealed in our interviews is one characterized by terror and trauma. The survivors we interviewed were children of five to fifteen years when the deportation orders came in the late spring of 1915. Families had only a few days to prepare for their departure. When they left, most took only what they could carry. A few days into their journey the men were separated out and shot. The women and children were left to fend for themselves on the long journey toward Syria. Many did not survive the journey. We speak today of the trauma of children in our society who are beaten or abused. We know that they are scarred for life, irreparably damaged. Yet we sometimes too quickly forget the impact of the deportation horrors on the consciousness of these elderly survivors in our own midst.

The third category of memories expressed by survivors in our interviews is characterized by images of

reprieve. The orphanages that were set up were sanctuaries, a safe place removed from the horrors of the deportation experience. Some of the child survivors had forgotten their native language so education was resumed. Structure and order once again became a part of their experience. They were taught skills in sewing and weaving. The orphanage experience was a transition from disorder, trauma, and chaos into order, stability, and structure. Children re-learned the Armenian language and reconnected with their national heritage, however shattered it might be in the wake of the first genocide of the 20th century.

The fourth moment in survivors' memories is the longest as measured by the number of years. It is the period of reconstruction, of re-creating a life that had been fractured. To listen to accounts of the genocide itself is painful, but many of the stories of adult life relate a continuing odyssey of suffering. They worked as gardeners, domestics, and shopkeepers. The genocide did not happen only in 1915; it continues daily in the life experience of survivors who are now 80, 90 and 100 years old.

"Many of these survivors feel ignored and left behind. What should we do with their memories?"

The last category of survivor recollection has to do with how the survivors think about the events of their childhood, whether they are more reconciled in their old age than in their youth. Surprisingly most survivors say they have grown more preoccupied with the genocide as they have gotten older. Why? We have come to believe that there is a fifth expression of survivor recollection. It is that stage when the survivors seek moral justification for the events of their past. Many survivors are consumed with the unjustness of their experience. They are outraged by the refusal of the Turkish government to acknowledge the sins of their forefathers. They mourn the memory of family members. They reflect on the life that might have been theirs. They live as Christians, yet they ponder a God who would allow a nation to be destroyed. They agonize over their grandchildren who have not learned the Armenian language and are marrying outside their Armenian heritage.

"Surprisingly most survivors say they have grown more preoccupied with the genocide as they have gotten older."

Finally, I want to reflect for a moment on the burden of this memory. Some survivors tell us that they have never told anyone their story, or at best only fragments have been shared. What does it mean to march through life with the burden of memory? Many of these survivors feel ignored and left behind. What should we do with their memories? This is the question facing the oral historian of the Armenian genocide. Life can never be the same once one witnesses the depth of human suffering or acknowledges the human capacity for evil. Beneath even the most light-hearted moments is a memory. The memory is that all is not well in the world, that pain and suffering lurk in the shadows of our own lives and those of the human community. So memory is a burden and yet it is also a privilege. It is memory that binds us together, to each other and to that community that transcends our own particularity and lends



As part of the Public Humanities Conference activities, the Santa Cruz City Museum brought its successful exhibit, "The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region" to the Fresno Metropolitan Museum

"Tucked away within the memories of survivors are a good many messages about what it means to be human and what it means to be heroic."

depth to our own individual lives. In the present age we are schooled to think more about the future than about our past. Yet I think we will be dangerous human beings if we break the connection with our memories.

Together, young and old, Armenian and non-Armenian, we need to hear the full story of the past of the human community. We need to challenge our stereotypes of the Turk by listening to the accounts of survivors about how some Turks who disagreed with the policies of their government gave shelter and food to their Armenian neighbors. We need to feel the agonized reflections of the survivors concerning a God who seemed indifferent to the majority of Armenians and yet is credited by others for their survival. Tucked away within the memories of survivors are a good many messages about what it means to be human and what it means to be heroic. And within these descriptions are prescriptions for those of us who have ears to hear them.

THE BURDEN OF MEMORY Second & Third Generation: Developing a Sense of Continuity

Margaret Bedrossian,
Lecturer in literature, UC Davis

I am in the position of a typical second-generation person in this country, trying to make contact with my past, trying to deepen my understanding, and in all of this trying to assess who I am. How am I related to this past?

I was born and raised in the Central Valley, and I think I understand some of the feelings which the Armenian immigrants must have about their old country. There is something about being close to the land, of having an understanding of where you are born and where you are raised which is very moving.

There was a well-developed life in the old country before 1915, and it is unfortunate that more people, especially those of the second and third generation, do not know more about the details of that life—the experiences in the villages, the communal values that these Armenians shared, the sense of belonging to the land. As we begin to place all of that in context, we can begin to appreciate our sources more and more. Those sources go beyond the genocide; they go back to a long, long past in the old country, almosts three thousand years' worth. It is very important to understand that.

Much of the self-image that Armenians brought with them to the United States had been shaped by a set of values which had been in the making for thousands of years. One of the most important factors in that value system is the experience of family. For the Armenians the family was a fortress, the line of first defense. Every member of the family had a specific place and set of responsibilities. Different generations lived together, and there was a respect for the wisdom of the old, and children had a great respect for their parents. Of course this is true of many other cultures. But I think it is important—and I speak as a younger Armenian—to look at what the family meant for the Armenians. It was a very closely bonded unit. Children were treasured as though they were not only a great hope but something precious beyond understanding.



A Public Humanities Conference participant listens to a discussion of the CCH grantmaking program

A second quality that comes through when viewing the videotapes is the pragmatism of the Armenians. They lived close to the earth and many of their customs came out of the earth—their farming, their gardens, even the rocks are important.

How can these memories of first-generation survivors foster a sense of continuity and morality among second and third generations? Is there something that wants to be, needs to be created as we second and third generation Armenians listen to these stories of our parents and grandparents? As I watched these videotapes I had the sense that there is a very large and very grand story here and it is made up of many little stories, each of which wants to be told. What do I do with the past? It's so sad. I don't understand it. Let the past be past? No. There's something here that wants to continue, and how it is going to continue will depend on those of the second and third generation.

Continuity comes when we are willing to look at and try to understand our own history. And for young people of the United States, Armenian or non-Armenian, I think that is one of the great lacks. We don't have enough opportunity, especially if we come from an ethnic group, to really understand how that ethnic group came to this country, what their experiences were here and what they were like in the old country. And even if we do learn about our heritage, we don't usually share our responses to this history with those of our own generation.

Morality comes from knowing our place in a larger totality. Morality means that we know what it means to relate to other members of the family. We know our place in that family, and we know our place within an ethnic group. We can place ourselves in larger and larger circles.

Watching these videotapes and entering into the memory of the Armenian immigrants is a wonderful way to educate our moral sense in very subtle ways. We begin to see there is a way in which people who have been fragmented can over a period of time begin to create new wholes out of these fragments.

As I listened to the videotapes, I remembered my father's stories and began to make connections between what I heard in my family and what I was seeing on the tapes. I began to see that that history was very real and that it was my history, mine in a way that went very deep, beyond anything I can talk about. There are affirmations that go beyond genocide. They have to do with cultivating a self image that is larger than one's own life.

The Idea of Memory in Writing

Peter Najarian, Lecturer in literature
at San Francisco State University,
author of *Daughters of Memory*

I have two personal connections to this topic of memory; one is my mother and one is my father. And I have cultural connections too which come from reading and from history—relics, churches, photographs. My mother would constantly tell me about her childhood—as much of it as she could remember. She liked to talk about her early days. Her parents, who were killed, were peasants. They were connected to the earth. My aunt, on the other hand, does not want to remember certain parts of her history. It is painful for her.

This issue, the importance of remembering, is important not only to Armenians but also to all people of genocide—Jewish, American Indians, others. Many of us say we have to remember what happened to our people. And there are others who say we don't want to remember. Let's forget about it. We want our kids to grow up American, not to be different, to live the good life. But on the other hand, what happens to being Armenian? What happens to the Armenian language? So there's a conflict.

I personally feel that it is very important to remember not only for my work but for all of us as a family. Because if we do not remember, then we have something inside us that is buried and is going to bother us. And it is also important for Turkey to remember. Turkey has to remember as a people that they did this thing. If they do not, then it is always going to be there in their life as a people. We know that from our own personal experiences.

The most important part of memory is remembering heaven and remembering hell. Like everyone else I want to remember my childhood, not only as a person but as a group—my childhood that goes all the way back to God, that leads to paradise. But on the other hand it seems that if I remember it all the way back, I don't just remember paradise and all the good things. I have to remember both sides. I have to remember not only that my grandmother was killed by the Turks, but that killing is going on all the time. It will go on tomorrow. And as a person, I am faced with this problem. Do I want to remember or do I not want to remember?



Visitors at the Fresno Metropolitan Museum study photos of the early Fresno Chinatown. The display is part of "The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region" exhibit.

"Cultures in Transition"

continued from page 3

alien land laws which attempted to prevent Japanese from owning and operating farms.

The culmination of the anti-Japanese feeling came in 1942 when President Roosevelt issued his executive order requiring that all people of Japanese descent, citizens and non-citizens alike, be relocated from California and the West coast. By the time that relocation took place, the very strict immigration laws of the 1920s had already been enforced for nearly two decades. These immigration laws established a quota system that not only restricted the number of people who could come to the United States but also established national quotas that encouraged relatively large numbers of people to come from northern and western Europe, made it very difficult for people from southern and eastern Europe to come, and banned any further immigration from Asia.

In effect the Chinese Exclusion Act was extended to Japan and the other independent countries of Asia by virtue of the 1924 Quota System Act. However, the quota system did not apply to the Western Hemisphere, and therefore did not apply to Mexico. Nor did the quota system apply to the Philippines, which were then an American territory. And so in the 1920s there was a large immigration from Mexico and to some degree from the Philippines. Oldtimers in the Valley refer to 1919-1920 as the year of the Mexican harvest, and by that they mean the first year in which the Mexican workers dominated the harvest labor force.

"The first massive multi-ethnic migration in California history is, of course, the California Gold Rush."

During the latter part of the 1930s the dust bowl migration partially replaced the Mexican and Filipino workers, but once World War II began, there was a shortage of labor and the border was opened up. People were encouraged to come across from Mexico and a large-scale migration began that has never really stopped.

The War also promoted a large internal migration of blacks to California. The large urban black populations that exist in California today are to a very large degree the result of demographic trends that began in World War II. These new ethnic and racial demographic mixtures that occurred during the War promoted conflict, discrimination, and prejudice. But in another sense World War II dramatically changed ethnic relations in America in that racism became identified with Nazism, became identified with the enemy.

By the end of the War, anti-racism and the idea of equal rights without regard to race had become for the first time established as a kind of American principle. The question was to what extent that abstract principle was going to turn into some kind of concrete reality. I think that much of the civil rights movement from 1955 to the late sixties was a process of trying to put your money where your mouth is, that is, trying to take this abstract principle and turn it into some sort of a reality.

Here in California it has always seemed to me that 1965 was perhaps the key year of that civil rights era. It was the year in which so many conditions that are still with us were established. It was the year of the Watts upheaval, the first of the great urban riots of the 1960s. It meant that the focus of the black protest movement shifted from the rural south to the urban north

and west. It meant that the tactic of non-violence was not always going to be followed. The year 1965 was the beginning of the Delano strike and the rise to prominence of Cesar Chavez. While that was a continuation of a long process of conflict over farm labor in California fields, it also established a new era, a beginning of Latino and Chicano activism in California and throughout the country.

"By the end of the War, anti-racism and the idea of equal rights without regard to race had become for the first time established as a kind of American principle."

The year 1965 was also the year of a fundamental change in American immigration policy. The old quota system with all its built-in prejudice and bias was done away with, and a new immigration law was established that for the first time since 1882 put Asia on an equal footing with Europe. This change in the law paved the way for the large scale Asian immigration that has occurred in the past twenty years from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Korea, and other Asian countries.

And finally, 1965 was the year that Lyndon Johnson sent combat troops to Vietnam. And of all the unforeseen consequences of that event—and virtually all of the consequences of that event were unforeseen—the one that was perhaps the least predictable was that it would lead to a very large immigration of Indochinese people to this country. Beginning in 1975 and continuing to the present day some 900,000 Indochinese refugee immigrants have come to the United States, primarily Vietnamese but also a significant number of Cambodians and Laotians including of course the Hmong people.

The idea of the federal government was that the refugees were to be spread around the country fairly evenly. In fact what has happened is that somewhere between 40% and 45% of the Indochinese immigrants are now living in California. Somewhere between 20% and 30% of all immigrants coming to the United States

today are coming to and staying in California. Those are figures for legal or documented aliens. If you were to include undocumented aliens, the percentage would be significantly higher. It is estimated that between a third and a half of all the population increase that will occur in California between now and the year 2000 will be due to foreign immigration, and the great bulk of those people will be from Latin America or Asia.

Let me end with a quotation from H. L. Mencken, the journalist and cultural commentator. He said that "the day that the gates go up, the language will begin to die." The gates he was talking about are the gates of immigration restriction. The language he was talking about is American English. Immigration provides a constant transfusion for American English, giving it new words, new meanings, new constructions, new nuances that provide a vitality. Mencken felt if that transfusion was ever cut off, the vitality of the language would begin to decline. Language is a very important part of culture, perhaps the most important single part of culture. And if "the gates go up", not just the language but the whole of culture will begin to lose some of its life, its vitality.

"Somewhere between 20% and 30% of all immigrants coming to the United States today are coming to and staying in California."

The Founding Fathers who wrote the Constitution in the 1780s embarked on a great political experiment. But they also, without quite realizing it, began to engage in a great social experiment—whether a nation of immigrants, a multi-national, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic nation could long endure and endure in an atmosphere of mutual respect and toleration and equal rights and privileges for all. We do not know how that experiment is going to work out, but I think the experience of Californians over the next couple of generations is going to have a great deal to do with the outcome of that experiment.



Young Jewish idealists attempt to build a new society in Israel following World War I as depicted in *Unsettled Land*, a film shown at the Jewish Film Festival in San Francisco and Berkeley.

JUNE GRANTS AWARDED

Dissemination of the Humanities

Black/Mexican-American Perspectives: California Traditions in Music and Poetry

Sponsor: Latino Consortium/KCET, Los Angeles
Project Director: David Crippens
Amount of Award: \$9,794

Two half-hour radio programs featuring the musical and literary contributions made by Mexican- and Afro-Americans will be produced by KSJV FM-91, Radio Bilingue, in Fresno. The program on music will focus on the *corridos* and the *blues*, two artistic forms that have maintained their vitality and cultural significance despite the changing historical, economic, and demographic conditions of the groups that have produced them. The program on literature will focus on poetry, especially that which draws upon oral traditions. The programs will be aired statewide in early 1989.

Women and Self-Sufficiency Film Project

Sponsor: Future Educational Films, Inc., San Francisco
Project Director: Theresa Tollini
Amount of Award: \$7,500

Five individual portraits, each of a woman at a different stage in the process of establishing self-sufficiency, will be included in a sixty-minute film that documents how women "come into their own." Since the portraits will be ethnically diverse, they will help to reveal how cultural values, forces and barriers influence a woman's move toward self-sufficiency. The film will be aired on PBS in June of 1989.

Humanities in Public Libraries

New People/Shared Dreams: A Pilot Project on Hmong Acculturation in the Central Valley

Sponsor: Merced County Library
Project Director: Ann Andersen
Amount of Award: \$7,500

The project will explore the history and cultural importance of Hmong music, using it as a point of focus to discuss their rapid acculturation in the Central Valley. Project activities will include assembling an exhibit of Hmong musical instruments and materials, creating a bilingual audiotape to accompany the exhibit, sponsoring a lecture on Hmong culture, and preparing a bibliography of materials on the Hmong. The exhibit will be presented at the annual Festival of Cultures in Merced, October 15. The lecture will be given on November 15 at the Merced County Library.

Values in Transition

Sponsor: Pasadena Public Library
Project Director: Edward Szynaka
Amount of Award: \$7,500

A series of four reading and discussion programs for senior citizens will be held at three branch libraries in Pasadena. Participants will discuss short stories by Ralph

Ellison, Kurt Vonnegut, William Faulkner, and Isaac Bashevis Singer. A final evaluation session will be conducted to assess the impact of the series on the values and ideas of the seniors. These reflections by the participants will be videotaped and become a permanent holding of the library. The programs will take place from October to November 1988.

Humanities for Californians

Central America Media Project

Sponsor: Pennsylvania Public Radio Associates, Philadelphia
Project Director: James Zweigle
Amount of Award: \$10,000 in outright funds and \$16,100 in matching funds if \$32,200 in outside gifts are raised

This project will produce and distribute six half-hour radio documentaries and thirteen five-minute radio pieces on Central America. The programs will address historical, cultural, and social issues in Central America as a background to understanding contemporary developments in the region. They will include interviews with scholars and analysts, government and opposition leaders in Central American countries, and Central American immigrants and refugees in this country. The series will be aired nationally on National Public Radio starting in June of 1989.

Samuel Beckett: Plays for Stage and Television

Sponsor: Global Village, New York
Project Director: John Reilly
Amount of Award: \$7,500 in outright funds and \$5,000 in matching funds if \$10,000 in outside gifts are raised

In October of this year, a scholar-led symposium will be held at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco to increase public understanding and appreciation of the art of Samuel Beckett. The two-day event will include screenings of videotapes of five of Beckett's plays followed by scholar-led discussions. The topics include: "Beckett's Roles for Women", "Krapps Last Tape", "Beckett's Late Work", and "Beckett's Process of Revision." A pamphlet that briefly discusses each theme and lists bibliographic references will be distributed to audience members at each session.

Humanities and Contemporary Issues

For Better or For Worse

Sponsor: Film Arts Foundation, San Francisco
Project Director: David Collier
Amount of Award: \$7,500 in outright funds and \$3,013 in matching funds if \$6,026 in outside gifts are raised

"For Better or For Worse," a one hour television documentary will present intimate portraits of five diverse

San Francisco Bay Area couples, each married fifty years or longer. The film will explore the joys and struggles of married life and address the issues surrounding long-term commitment. This grant will support the script development phase of the project including research, interviews, and production of a sample clip.

Jewish Film Festival

Sponsor: Jewish Film Festival, Berkeley
Project Director: Deborah Kaufman
Amount of Award: \$7,500 in outright funds and \$3,386 in matching funds if \$6,772 in outside gifts are raised

The 8th Annual Jewish Film Festival will take place over a two-week period in July and August. The Festival's purpose is to screen new films on Jewish subjects by independent filmmakers and to organize and conduct panel discussions on topics of importance to the American Jewish community. This grant will support two panel discussions and four related film showings on the topics of "The Image of the Palestinian in Israeli Cinema" and "Myths and Stereotypes of Jewish Women in Film."

Humanities in California Life

Asian Pacific Americans: Six Generations in California

Sponsor: Pasadena City College
Project Director: Susie Ling
Amount of Award: \$7,478 in outright funds and \$425 in matching funds if \$850 in outside gifts are raised

A program of seven lectures by scholars in Asian American Studies will be presented at Pasadena City College in 1989. The lectures will trace the history and cultural heritage of Asian Pacific Americans spanning six generations. The lectures will be supplemented with two film screenings and an historical photo exhibit. The purpose of this public program is to bring greater understanding of the history and culture of California's fastest growing minority group to audiences in the San Gabriel Valley and Los Angeles. The lectures will begin in January of 1989.

Rock and Hawk: The Life and Poetry of Robinson Jeffers

Sponsor: San Jose Center for Poetry and Literature
Project Director: Ina Cumpiano
Amount of Award: \$7,500

Robinson Jeffers is a poet whose visionary writings have awakened readers to the unique power and grandeur of the Central California coast. This project will develop a script for a 26-minute film on the life and work of Jeffers, examining his relationship to the Big Sur coastline, his influence on the work of later California writers and artists, and his own lifestyle, creative process, and interest in Native American culture and world mythologies.

Adult Literacy Project Wins Broadcast Award

The International Reading Association presented its Broadcast Media Award for Radio to Audrey Coleman for her CCH-sponsored project, "Working in America," a series of short stories written by California authors and presented in both audio and text forms. The purpose of the series, which was aired over the National Public Radio Module Service, is to introduce adult, new readers to literary material written for the general public rather than prepared especially for them.

Pacifica Radio Series on Bill of Rights Wins Awards

Pacifica Radio's "Bicentennial Edition of the Bill of Rights Radio Education Project" has won awards for broadcast excellence from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the 37th Annual Broadcast Industry Awards from San Francisco State University. Both of the awards to this CCH-sponsored project were for exemplary programming in the area of public affairs. Produced by Adi Gevins, the thirteen half-hour documentaries focused on contemporary issues that have their basis in the Bill of Rights, such as gun control, prayer in public schools, and abortion. The series was broadcast over approximately 70 stations and is available on cassette from the Pacifica Radio Archive.

Humanities Publication Seeks Essays

The Nebraska Humanist, the annual publication of the Nebraska Committee for the Humanities, is seeking informative essays of five to ten pages on the topic "Re-reading the Classics of the American West" for publication in the 1989 issue. Interested writers should submit their topic by October 15 along with a summary of the ideas they intend to explore. For further information, call Jane Hood, Executive Director, at 402/474-2131.

Photo History of Korean Immigration Opens in Garden Grove

The City of Garden Grove, the site of California's second largest Korean American commercial district, is hosting "Koreatown: A Photo History," at the Mill House gallery from June 23 through July 18. The exhibit contains 250 historical and contemporary photographs and selected artifacts that document the history of Korean immigration to the United States and the development of the Korean-American community. The exhibit was displayed at USC's Doheny Library in May and will travel to San Francisco, Sacramento, and UCLA later in the year.

Video Awards Competition Seeks Entries

The Bay Area Video Coalition is soliciting entries for the 1988 James D. Phelan Awards in Video. Three awards of \$2,500 each will be made to video artists in recognition of past achievement in the field of video art. All applicants must have been born in California. The awards are sponsored by the San Francisco Foundation and are funded by the James D. Phelan Trust. Deadline for entries is October 14. Application forms can be obtained from BAVC, 1111 17th St, San Francisco 94107, 415/861-3282.

Jewish Film Festival Sponsors Seminars in San Francisco

The 8th Annual Jewish Film Festival is sponsoring three free seminars at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco: "On Making Jewish Films" is scheduled for Sunday, July 31 at 12:30 pm; "Images of Palestinians in Israeli Cinema" will take place Monday, August 1 at 7:30 pm; "Myths and Stereotypes of Jewish Women in Film" will be held on Thursday, August 4 at 5:30 pm. The seminars will feature discussions by filmmakers, writers, scholars, and actors. These CCH-sponsored seminars are free to the public and will be sign interpreted for the hearing impaired. For more information, call 415/548-0556.

NEH Offers Grants to Younger Scholars

Each year the National Endowment for the Humanities offers outstanding students the opportunity to pursue their research interests in the humanities during the summer. Students receive support for nine weeks of full-time work under the supervision of a faculty mentor. Last year the Endowment made 166 grants—45 to secondary school students and 121 to undergraduates below the level of senior. Awards are \$2,200 for college students and \$1,800 for high school students. Each stipend includes \$400 for the project adviser. The deadline for applications is November 1. For information about the program contact Leon Bramson, Program Officer, NEH, 202/786-0463.

NEH Publishes List of "Summertime Favorites"

The National Endowment for the Humanities has compiled a list of recommended summer reading for students based on input from public and private schools across the country. The list, entitled "Summertime Favorites," includes suggested reading for grades K-6, 7-8, and 9-12. Free copies of the booklist can be obtained by contacting Joy Evans, Rm. 406, NEH, Washington, D.C. 20506, 202/786-0438.

Council Membership Nominations Invited

The California Council for the Humanities, an organization of public-spirited citizens interested in the humanities, will be selecting new members for its Council in 1989 and invites nominations from the public.

Members serve four-year terms. The public is invited to submit names of scholars and public citizens who have made significant contributions to the humanities. In inviting new members, the Council seeks representation from California's diverse geographical, ethnic, and professional constituencies. This year, the Council especially seeks nominations of women, nominees from Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, the central coast counties from Ventura to Santa Cruz, Orange, and San Diego

"Black Angelenos" Exhibit Continues in Los Angeles

"Black Angelenos: The Afro-American in Los Angeles, 1850-1950," an exhibit at the California Afro-American Museum in Los Angeles, opened in May and will continue through March of 1989. The purpose of the exhibit, according to the project director Lonnie Bunch, is to reconstruct the events in the lives of the Black Angelenos and to trace the evolution of a community. The exhibit recreates four settings: the Henry Owens home, a church with stained glass windows, the Dunbar Hotel, and a World War II GI Bill house. The California Afro-American Museum is located at 600 State Drive in Exposition Park, Los Angeles. It is open to the public from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm daily. Admission is free. For more information on this and other exhibits, call 213/744-7432.

MacArthur Foundation Supports Library Acquisitions

Recognizing that many of the highly regarded PBS television series are too expensive for public libraries to purchase, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation is supporting an effort to offer twenty classic PBS series to libraries at a major discount. For nearly 90% less than the original cost, over 200 hours of programming are now available to libraries. In addition, participating libraries will receive posters for display, copies of a 24-page program guide, a press kit and promotional radio and tv spot announcements. The Foundation will be offering these series at reduced prices for a limited time only. For further information write the MacArthur Foundation Library Video Classics Project, P.O. Box 409113, Chicago, IL, 60640, 1-800-346-5383.

Counties; from Black and Hispanic constituencies; and from California community colleges.

You are invited to submit a nomination on the form below. If you do so, you must also include a resume and a brief statement, indicating the nominee's occupation, education, areas of public service, and special qualifications for membership. If you are nominating yourself, please include a letter of recommendation; if nominating another, please include assurance that the nominee is willing to serve.

Please submit names for consideration as soon as possible. Nominations must be in the Council's San Francisco office no later than Friday, October 7, 1988.

I nominate _____
as a member of the California Council for the Humanities
Professional Title: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____
Nominated by: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____

Send to:

CCH, 312 Sutter St., Suite 601, San Francisco, CA 94108

CALENDAR OF HUMANITIES EVENTS

Exhibits

- through September 10 "Koreatown: A Photo History" is an exhibit which will travel to the Korean Festival on September 1 and will feature historical and contemporary photographs on the Korean Community in California, at the Korean Cultural Service Gallery, 5505 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles. 213/936-7141.
- October 15 "New People/Shared Dreams: A Pilot Project on Hmong Acculturation in the Central Valley" is an exhibit at the one-day *Festival of Cultures*, Merced County Fairgrounds, Commerce Building, 900 "J" Street, Merced, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For further information, please call Ms. Ann Andersen at 209/385-7484.
- through October 31 "The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region Exhibit" opened on July 4th at Monterey County Agricultural and Rural Life Museum, King City. Please contact the Visitors Bureau at 408/385-1484 for detailed information.
- through January 1989 "Oakland's Firsts: Black Pioneers and Institutions," is a photo exhibit continuing at East Bay Historical Society, 5606 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland, T-Fri: 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. 415/658-3158
- through March 1989 "Black Angelenos: The Afro-American in Los Angeles, 1850-1950" is an exhibit continuing at the California Afro-American Museum, 600 State Dr., Exposition Park, Los Angeles. For more information, please contact Mr. Lonnie Bunch at 213/744-7432.

Events

- July 13 "Taper Playviews," a pre-and post-play discussion of "Lost Highway" at Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue, 7 p.m. Dr. D.K. Wilgus, UCLA, Dept. of Folklore, will lead the discussion. 213/972-7353
- August 4 "Myths and Stereotypes of Jewish Women in Film" is the final seminar taking place at San Francisco's Castro Theatre, at 5:30 p.m. It will critique common imagery such as "The Manipulating Mother" and "The Jewish American Princess." The panel will be moderated by Jane Rubin, lecturer in Ethics and Philosophy at U. C. Berkeley and San Francisco. The screening of "Bachelor Girl" will be held after the seminar at 7:15 p.m. For more information, please call 415/548-0556.
- September 20 "Values In Transition" is a reading and discussion program for Senior Citizens scheduled to be held in Central Library's Donald R. Wright Auditorium, 285 East Walnut Street, Pasadena, at 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Merrill Gerber, local author, will be the keynote speaker. Additional discussion sessions area scheduled at branch libraries on Tuesday mornings 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Please contact Bernadette Barnes, Pasadena Public Library, at 818/405-4607 for more details.
- October 20-23 "Women of the Americas Film and Video Festival" will be held at the York Theatre in The Mission Cultural Center, York and 24th Street, San Francisco. This festival is "the first major West Coast tribute to the growing and diverse body of work in film and video produced by Latin American women of the United States." Additional information may be obtained from Cine Accion at 415/553-8135.

July 17

"Taper Playviews," a pre-and post-play discussion of "Lost Highway" at Mark Taper Forum, Los Angeles Music Center, 6:30 p.m. Dr. Willi Smythe, State Folklorist of Oklahoma, will speak on "Nashville, Country Music and Radio as a Medium for Rural Peoples." 213/972-7353

July 31

"On Making Jewish Films" is the first of three seminars taking place at the Jewish Film Festival, July 28 to August 11. This seminar will be held at San Francisco's Castro Theatre, at 12:30 p.m., and will be moderated by New York film critic Annette Insdorf, author of "Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust" and "Francois Truffaut." All seminars are free to the public and will be sign interpreted for the hearing impaired. For further information, please call 415/548-0556.

August 1

"Images of Palestinians in Israeli Cinema" is a seminar taking place at San Francisco's Castro Theatre, at 7:30 p.m. and will be moderated by U. C. Berkeley Middle East Historian William Brinner. The movie "Beyond The Walls" will be screened prior to the seminar at 5:30 p.m. The screening of "Unsettled Land" will be held at 9:00 p.m. For further details, please call 415/548-0556.

CCH Seeks Input on Program and Policies

Do you have ideas for public humanities programming in California? The CCH is interested in hearing from you. In 13 years of grantmaking the CCH has awarded more than 8 million dollars to over 1000 projects in an effort to bring the insights of history, literature, philosophy, and related disciplines to the citizens of California. We need your input and feedback in order to know if our program meets the needs of people from the various geographical, ethnic, and professional constituencies through the state. Once a year at our annual Public Humanities Conference, such as the one held in Fresno in May, staff and Council meet with members of the public who are interested in providing quality public humanities programs for the adult out-of-school audience. We also welcome your written comments and suggestions. Send your letters to CCH, 312 Sutter St., Suite 601, San Francisco, 94108. If you would like to know more about the Council's activities, please request a "CCH Program Description." This four-page summary describes the goals, budget, grants program, and proposed directions for CCH.

CCH Offers Proposal-Writing Workshops

Proposal-writing workshops for those interested in submitting a grant application to CCH are scheduled for August 16th and 19th in the San Francisco office and August 23rd and 25th in the Los Angeles office. The San Francisco workshops are 10:00 to noon at 312 Sutter Street. The Los Angeles workshops are 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 at 315 West Ninth Street. The workshops are free, but space is limited so please call in advance to register: San Francisco 415/391-1474; Los Angeles 213/623-5993.

CALIFORNIA COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES

312 Sutter Street
Suite 601
San Francisco, CA 94108
415/391-1474

315 W. Ninth Street
Suite 1103
Los Angeles, CA 90015
213/623-5993

MORTON ROTHSTEIN, Chair
Professor of History, UC Davis

ALBERT CAMARILLO
*Professor of History
Stanford University, Stanford*

CONSTANCE M. CARROLL
*President
Saddleback College, Mission Viejo*

SISTER MAGDALEN COUGHLIN
President, Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles

MARY CURTIN
Writer, Riverside

LONI DING
President, Vox Productions, Inc., San Francisco

KATHRYN GAEDDERT
*History Center Administrator
Sacramento History Center*

ANN GARRY
*Professor of Philosophy
California State University, Los Angeles*

ARLEN HANSEN
*Professor of English
University of the Pacific, Stockton*

JOHN F. HENNING
*Executive Secretary/Treasurer
California Labor Federation AFL-CIO, San Francisco*

HELEN HERNANDEZ
*Vice President Public Affairs
Embassy Communications, Burbank*

FRANCISCO JIMENEZ
*Director, Division of Arts and Humanities
Santa Clara University*

MICHAEL OWEN JONES
*Professor of Folklore and History
UCLA*

SISTER KATHLEEN KELLY
*Dean of the Doherty Campus
Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles*

PETER KLASSEN
*Dean, School of Social Sciences
California State University, Fresno*

DUNCAN KNOWLES
*Vice President and Director
Leadership Communications, Bank of America, San Francisco*

BARBARA LOGAN
Businesswoman, Canoga Park

CATHERINE BABCOCK MAGRUDER
Producing Director, Ukiah Players Theatre

MARC MANCINI
*Professor of French and Cinema
West Los Angeles College*

HERBERT MORRIS
Dean of Humanities, UCLA

CHARLES MUSCATINE
*Professor of English
UC Berkeley*

THOMAS PAYZANT
*Superintendent
San Diego Unified School District*

RICARDO J. QUINONES
*Professor of Comparative Literature
Claremont-McKenna College, Claremont*

ANITA SCHILLER
*Reference Librarian/Bibliographer
UC San Diego*

DON SCHWEITZER
*Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences
California State University, Fullerton*

HARRY TAM
*President, United Acupuncturists of California
San Francisco*

SUSANTSU
*Artist and Research Associate
Center for Chinese Studies, San Francisco*

RUTH WATANABE
*Partner, Video Action
Los Angeles*

AL YOUNG
Writer, Palo Alto

CARMEN ZAPATA
*President and Managing Producer
Bilingual Foundation of the Arts, Los Angeles*

STAFF:

JAMES QUAY
Executive Director

CAITLIN CROUGHAN
Associate Director

SUSAN GORDON
Program Officer

CAROL MURPHY
Editor

PAMELA LYNCH
Administrative Assistant

ROSALINO DIZON
Bookkeeper/Secretary

MARY ELLEN NASH
Receptionist

NEXT PROPOSAL DEADLINE: October 1, 1988

Proposals for this deadline must conform to the 1988 Program Announcement. Send 10 copies of all proposals (14 copies of media proposals) to the San Francisco office by the due date.

Non-Profit Org.

U.S. Postage

PAID

San Francisco, CA
Permit No. 11379

HUMANITIES NETWORK

Summer 1988
Volume 10/Number 3

Public Humanities Conference Explores "Cultures in Transition"

The Public Humanities Conference held in Fresno in May had as its theme, "Cultures in Transition: Immigration in the Central Valley." The three-day series of events focused on the experiences of some of the many immigrant cultures in the Valley—Chinese, Armenian, Chicano, and Southeast Asian. The keynote for the conference was sounded by Maxine Hong Kingston who read from her work in progress, *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book*. This is a book about cultural identity—seeking identity, changing it, blending the Chinese voice with the American one. Kingston, whose work is influenced by Chinese mythology and the "talk story" tradition wanted to write a Chinese-American "Song of the Self" and make it a part of American literature. Her goal in *Tripmaster* was to "suggest many stories and allow the reader to read the book and continue the stories on his own. My stories will suggest further stories."

The theme of "continuing the story" was central to the panel discussion on "Image and Memory: Armenian Survivors in the San Joaquin Valley." Videotapes of the reminiscences of first-generation Armenian immigrants were shown and the question of continuity was addressed by their children and grandchildren. How am I related to this past? Something there wants to continue and how it will continue depends on those of the second and third generation.

For most of the Southeast Asian communities in Fresno, the issue of two cultures meeting and being in conflict is an everyday experience. The roundtable discussion that focused on the problems and perspectives of the recent Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian immigrants revealed similar stories of hope, tragedy, and struggle.



Maxine Hong Kingston reads from *Tripmaster Monkey* at the annual Public Humanities Conference

Through it all, the question kept surfacing about the conflict between two identities—native born and American—how to balance them, blend them, be in "two worlds."

For all of the ethnic groups represented at the Public Humanities Conference and for many more of us as well, this need to balance two cultural identities is a very real question. It is one that was addressed in a recent lecture by Alasdair MacIntyre, Professor of Philosophy at Vanderbilt University, at the national conference of State Humanities Councils. MacIntyre noted that "it is a good deal more difficult to be an American than to belong to most other peoples. One has to have two identities: one, that of an American, sharing the common life and contributing to it, and the other that of one's own particular ethnic background.

continued on page 4